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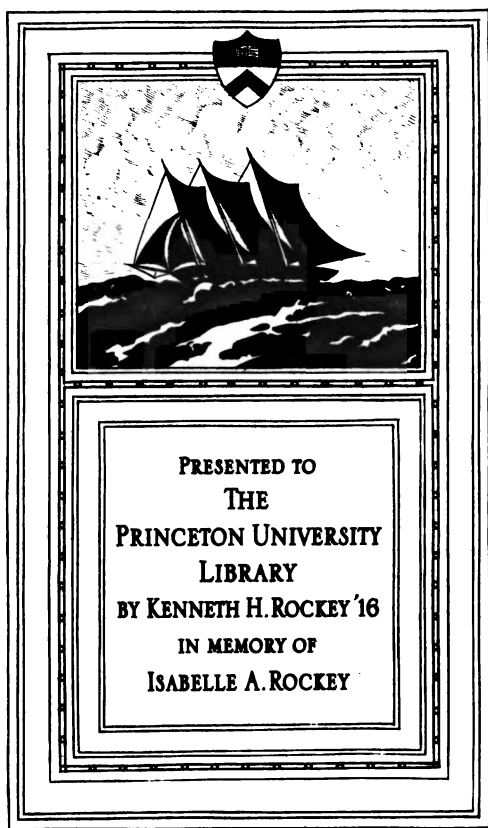
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ON THE SUPPLY OF
EMPLOYMENT AND SUBSISTENCE
FOR
THE LABOURING CLASSES,
&c. &c.

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ON THE SUPPLY OF
EMPLOYMENT AND SUBSISTENCE
FOR THE
LABOURING CLASSES,
IN
FISHERIES, MANUFACTURES, AND THE CUL-
TIVATION OF WASTE LANDS;
WITH
REMARKS ON THE OPERATION OF THE
SALT DUTIES,
AND A PROPOSAL FOR THEIR REPEAL.

ADDRESSED TO THE
RIGHT HON. NICHOLAS VANSITTART,
BY
SIR THOMAS BERNARD, BART.

LONDON:

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~~(Rocky)~~

A LETTER,

&c.

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THE PROVIDING of new and adequate sources of healthful and beneficial employment for a numerous and increasing population, is at present the general and important object of the public attention. After the arduous and successful contest for the liberty and independence of Europe, in which we have persevered for above twenty years, we now find other indispensable

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duties, which call for our exertions. We have to supply means of occupation and subsistence for those, to whom not only England, but Europe is so deeply indebted; the duty and difficulty of which are increased in proportion to the immense numbers which we have enrolled by sea and land, and to the distinguished part which we have taken in restoring to the civilized world the blessings of social order and civil government. At the same time, many of the labouring poor, by a concurrence of unprecedented circumstances, have been deprived of their ordinary means of labour. In our efforts, however, for the relief of our fellow subjects, it is no small encouragement to reflect that, during a sanguinary contest of more than twenty years, in which some of the fairest portions of the habitable world have been desolated and laid waste,—our population has been gradually increasing,—our internal improvements have advanced without interruption,—our commerce and manufactures have been more than doubled,

—above three millions* of unproductive acres have been brought into cultivation, and an increasing surplus of more than fourteen millions a year has been exclusively and, I trust, inalienably appropriated towards the reduction of our national debt. With these advantages, indeed, it would be the excess of weakness and cowardice, to despair of providing an adequate remedy for our present inconveniences,—by opening new sources of occupation in our fisheries, agriculture, manufactures and commerce ; so as not only to provide employment and subsistence for our brave sailors and soldiers, but at the same time to afford relief to others of the labouring class, under difficulties and distresses, which by some have been imputed to renewed PEACE and PLENTY, but may be attributed to other and very different causes, which I shall endeavour to explain.

In an age like the present, fruitful in

* Chalmers' State of the United Kingdom at the Peace of Paris.

Causes of scheme and enterprize, rival want of employment. banks had been set up in country towns and villages, by petty tradesmen with little credit and no capital. In order to circulate their paper, these new bankers dealt in corn and other articles of life, and advanced their paper to others for the same purpose, with the noxious effect of raising the markets, and producing a kind of temporary scarcity.* Taking advantage of this increased price of the produce of the soil, a knavish race of *land-valuers* impressed the mind of the landowner with chimerical ideas† of the value of real property, and induced him to set the rent of his land far above its in-

* This subject is ably treated in the British Review of August 1816.

† The madness of high rents and of high prices became as epidemical, as it formerly was in the South Sea year. When the *Village Banker* had made his agreement for granaries of wheat and barley, or for estates in lands and mines, he scorned to shrink from his bargain, however improvident it might appear. He only set to work with his clerk, to fabricate more notes, to pay for his purchase; as Swift's madman, when he

trinsic worth.—A favourable harvest, however, blighted all their hopes ; and the price of corn was gradually returning to its natural level, when the guilt, the impatience, and the mutual distrust of these monopolists, glutted and depressed the markets,—and a general alarm, the failure of bankers, the insolvency of tenants, and the distress of landlords, were the necessary and immediate consequences. The pecuniary distress which has very generally followed those failures, weakened the spirit of commercial enterprize, stopped some of our public works, checked the improvements of private property, and lessened the demand for labour throughout the United Kingdom,—just at the time when the restoration of peace occasioned the discharge of the immense numbers of labouring men, engaged in the sea and land service, and in the various departments had made his ten notches on his skewer, threw it on the table,

“ Shall I, ye Gods (he cries) my debts compound ?

There, take my tally for ten thousand pound.”

ments subservient to or connected with it. This is a situation of extraordinary difficulty, requiring the greatest degree of abilities and attention in Government, to cope with ; and it is a very fortunate circumstance for this country, that at such a crisis, we have a strong and efficient administration, competent to contend with the difficulties that surround them.

As the evil is not local or temporary, the Sources of increased demand for labour. remedy must not only be general in its effect, but permanent in its duration.—Except the greater evil of the renewal of the horrors of war, no measure seems adequate to the object, without the removal of every existing obstacle and impediment to the employment of the labouring class ; so as to augment the call for manual labour, in *Agriculture, Fisheries, and Manufactures* ; and particularly by the cultivation of our WASTE LANDS and the extension of our FISHERIES, to provide new sources of acceptable occupation. Looking to this object,

it appears to me, and I shall endeavour to prove, that there is no obstacle or impediment, that operates so generally and fatally against the increase of employment for the labouring class, in these and many other respects, as the existence of the SALT DUTIES.

There is hardly to be found in the infinite variety of created matter, any Account thing more valuable, or more gene- of Salt. rally applicable to use, than COMMON SALT. Composed of two deleterious materials, *chlorine* and *sodium*,—the united substance is more beneficial and salubrious, than it is in the power of our limited understanding to comprehend. Every accession of knowledge discovers new benefits and uses in it. Its spirit is diffused over the boundless ocean. It gives health and purity to the mass of waters, and to the inhabitants of the deep abyss. It preserves every species of food for the use of man, renews the exhausted soil and restores its fertility, and is healthful and acceptable to every kind of animal. In respect of this

important and necessary article of life, England has been peculiarly fortunate. Her brine springs are rich and abundant; and, what is extraordinary, are stronger in proportion as they are more and more worked by the pump. A gallon of brine will yield above two pounds and a half of solid salt; whilst those foreign springs, which are the subject of the French report in 1795, are not of half the strength of the brine springs in the county of Chester. Add to this, that the waters which wash the bays and inlets of our coasts, are capable of producing an inexhaustible supply of salt; and that the subterraneous treasures of coal that abound in every part of our Island, afford means which no other country possesses, of purifying and crystallizing it for our own use, for the extension of our commerce, and for the supply of the world. No country indeed has been in this respect more favoured, except so far as (like the wand of Sancho's physician) the arm of Government is extended, to prevent our free enjoyment of the bounty of Providence.

In preparing the salt from the brine, there is a refuse part, which is ^{Its use as a} formed by the separation and de- ^{Manure.} composition of the grosser particles from the pure salt. This is cleared out from the pans, and thrown on the ground, to the amount of several bushels * at each boiling. Before the excessive increase of the duties (which now are thirty pounds on a ton of salt, the original value of which is about fifteen shillings) the salt proprietors were allowed to dispose of this

* In his Agricultural Survey of Cheshire, (p. 238.) Mr. Holland notices an experiment made with this *refuse salt*, where it was spread in the middle of October on a piece of *sour rushy ground*, after the rate of *eight* bushels to the acre, and in another part *sixteen* bushels. In a short time the vegetation disappeared totally, and during the month of April following, not a blade of grass was to be seen. In the latter end of the Month of May a most flourishing crop of rich grass made its appearance on that part where the eight bushels had been laid. In the month of July, the other portion produced a still stronger crop: the cattle were remarkably fond of it, and during the whole ensuing winter, and for several years, the land retained, and yet exhibits, a superior verdure to the neighbouring closes.

refuse salt to the farmers; who knew the value of it as a manure, and (however inferior it might be to pure salt), were very glad to purchase as much as they could get of it, at twenty-five shillings a ton ; half of which went as a duty to Government, and the rest was a clear gain to the salt proprietor. The late Lord Coventry used to have a regular supply of this manure, sent from Droitwich to his place at Crome Court ; the excise officer attending to see it moved and laid on the land, and receiving a compliment for his extra attendance. The quantity of this manure, which was at one time sold at Northwich alone, to the farmers of that neighbourhood, amounted, as we are informed by Bishop Watson, to near 120,000 bushels annually. This was a very considerable boon to agriculture, and an equal advantage to the salt proprietor and to Government in respect of the duty it paid. But when the duties on salt were still more increased, the disposal of this refuse salt was prohibited, to the great regret of the farmers ;—the country was deprived of the benefit of a cheap and rich manure,—and

the whole of this *refuse salt* is now, under a relentless order, carefully swept up by the proprietor's labourers in the exciseman's presence, and thrown into the river.

In order to promote and encourage the improvement of WASTE LANDS, as ^{for Waste} an additional source of occupation ^{Lands.} for the disbanded veteran and unemployed labourer, no measure can be proposed so desirable or effectual, as the removal of the impediments that arise from the duties on salt; the use of which in agriculture, is now prohibited by a tax of forty times the value of the article. The supply of means for bringing the soil *immediately and with little expense* into produce, affords the best and most effectual encouragement and incitement to the cultivation of waste and unprofitable lands.* It is thus that the intro-

* Mr. Holland has also recorded an Experiment made on a meadow, where the after grass was of so coarse and rank a nature that the cattle would not eat it; but upon some salt being laid upon a part of this meadow, they have ever since preferred the grass

duction of LIME into our list of *manures*, has produced in the course of the last thirty years, the most beneficial and extraordinary effects in this country, by reclaiming millions of acres, hitherto deemed uncultivable. The vicinity of a lime quarry, or the power of communicating with one by water carriage, is marked in every part of England by improved cultivation

growing on that ground, to every other part of the field, and eaten up every blade. "The good effects of salt (he adds) are also seen by mixing it even with the coarsest manure. A gentleman lately carried a small quantity of couch-grass roots and other rubbish, harrowed off his land, to the salt works, and laid it for some time upon the ground, where the foul salt by the direction of the officer is destroyed; he then carried it back, and mixed it with other manure. His barley and his hay grass were strong from this composition, beyond his most sanguine expectations.—Its effects on fallow lands are equally advantageous: by sowing it at the time of breaking up the land for a fallow, its strong saline quality destroys vegetation, and every noxious insect; but by being mixed sufficiently with the soil, before the wheat is sown, it adds a strong nutriment, and insures the best of crops." *Holland's Agricultural Survey of Cheshire*, p. 237.

and increased fertility :—yet lime is not so *cheap*, nor so *powerful*, nor so *universal* a manure as SALT. Lime must be applied in much larger quantities;* the carriage is much more expensive, and there are

* In a periodical publication of March, 1802, is stated an experiment, to ascertain the comparative strength of SALT and LIME, as manures. A compost of *refuse salt* was mixed with the earth taken out of water furrows; and at the same time some lime was also mixed with a portion of the same earth. “They were each laid on different parts of the same field. That part of the field which had the lime compost laid upon it, vegetated strongly; but it bore no comparison to the health and vigour of the vegetation of the other part of the field, which had the compost with salt laid upon it; and, notwithstanding five years have elapsed, one may still trace by the quantity of grass thrown up, the extent to which the salt compost had been spread.—Having had such strong proof of its good effect, he was induced to try another experiment with the salt. He, last spring, strewed a portion of land *pretty thickly* over with it, without any admixture of earth: the consequence has been, that he has not only not received the expected advantage, but vegetation has been destroyed, and the land is *for the present*, almost bare.”

many parts of England, where it cannot be had at a price to answer for the husbandman. But SALT, *duty free*, is a great deal cheaper, and (as far as experiment have gone*) very superior in power and permanency of effect; and it is to be easily obtained in all the remote and desert parts of the island, the expense of carriage being comparatively nothing. At the same time its powerful quality, and the extreme caution required in its application, have occasioned some doubts with regard to its use as a manure. It seems, however, invariably to have answered, when used in the very small quantity of *a bushel† to*

* To manure twenty acres of land with *lime*, where lime can be got, will require two hundred cart loads of lime, which, at only a shilling a load, will cost ten pounds; whilst twenty bushels of *salt*, at the expense of ten shillings, mixed up with three or four loads of loam or dirt, will answer the same purpose.

I mention *one bushel to an acre*, on the authority of a gentleman who made a series of experiments on salt as a manure, and held that the proportion of a bushel to an acre answered best, and made the land most productive. Different proportions, however, may suit different soils.

an acre, and when used in too great abundance, to have been as destructive of vegetation, as it is friendly to it in small and carefully measured proportions. Bishop Watson accounts for these effects of salt, “when applied as a manure “*in small quantities*, from its efficacy in “reducing weeds, dried herbage, dead “roots, &c. into a putrid, oily mass ;” * and he goes on to observe, that when salt is used in a larger proportion, it preserves these matters from corruption, and the fertility of the ground is thereby diminished, or wholly destroyed. This may be confirmed and illustrated by reference to Sir John Pringle’s Experiments,†

* Chemical Essays, vol. ii. p. 74.

† “Nothing could be more unexpected (says Sir JOHN PRINGLE) than to find sea salt a hastener of putrefaction. But the fact is thus: one drachm of salt preserves two drachms of fresh beef, in two ounces of water, above 30 hours, uncorrupted, in a heat equal to that of the human body; or, what amounts to the same, this quantity of salt keeps flesh about 20 hours longer sweet, than pure water; but half a drachm of salt does not preserve it above two hours longer. This

which prove that *common salt* when used in small quantities accelerates the *putrefaction* of animal substances, but when used in larger quantities it retards it. Whatever

experiment has been already mentioned. Now I have since found that 25 grains have little or no *antiseptic* virtue ; and that ten or fifteen, or even twenty grains, manifestly both hasten and heighten the corruption. The most putrefying quantity of salt, with this proportion of salt and water, is about ten grains. It is moreover to be remarked, that in warm infusions with these smaller quantities, the salt, instead of hardening the flesh, as it does in a dry form in brine, or even in solutions, such as our standard, it here softens and relaxes the texture of the meat, more than plain water ; though much less than water with chalk, or the testaceous powders, Many inferences might be made from this experiment ; but I shall only mention one. Salt, the indispensable seasoner of animal food, has been supposed to act by an *antiseptic* quality, correcting the too great tendency of meats to putrefaction ; but since it is never taken in aliment beyond the proportion of the corrupting quantities in our experiment, it would appear that salt is subservient to digestion, chiefly by a *septic* virtue, that is, by softening and resolving meats ; an action very different from what is commonly believed." *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. 46. p. 557.

may be the *physical* cause, it seems now to be practically ascertained, that *salt* used in *very small* quantities, and mixed with loam or mould, is a valuable and powerful manure; but that in large quantities* it is pernicious. The fertilizing power of a *little salt* is alluded to in Scripture; where the extraordinary conversions, to be produced by a few illiterate disciples, are compared to the power of a small portion of salt to fertilize an extent of soil:—"YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH."

The use of salt as a manure, however, if we were relieved from the ^{For Hay,} duties, would not be confined to ^{Cattle, &c.} *waste lands*. The practice which existed a

† In the second Volume of the Communications of the BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, there is a detail of some experiments made by Mr. Fenna on the use of salt for manure. As he used in some instances as much as fifteen bushels an acre, and on his general average nine bushels an acre, his experiments serve only to prove that *salt in large quantities is injurious to land*, and to offer a long and laborious commentary on the old adage of NE QUID NIMIS.

few years ago, of applying the *refuse salt* as a *manure*, would be renewed, and extended to every part of the kingdom. The farmer would also use the pure and marketable salt, the price of which would not be so much as he formerly paid for *refuse salt*. Applied in the small quantities I have mentioned, and especially when mixed in the compost dunghill,* salt is the best and the cheapest of all manures, that can be used in the courses of agriculture. Its value in preserving hay which has been exposed to wet, has been long known, though the

* The fertilizing property of SEA MUD is well known.—In Holland's Survey of Cheshire (page 368) there is some account of its prolific effects. Manured with it, land (according to this account) yields of oats or barley, the first year, from 100 to 160 bushels per acre: planted with potatoes the second year, they seldom had less than 400 bushels an acre, 90 lbs. to the bushel; the third year as much wheat as could grow on the land; and the fourth year large crops of oats and clover, or barley and clover. The virtue of *sea mud* consists chiefly in the SALT which it contains; and it seems very practicable, by mixing a proper proportion of *salt with common dirt or mould*, to produce a manure as effectual and beneficial as SEA MUD.

salt duties have now in a great measure precluded the use of it.—There is a custom in Spain and Portugal, which I have personally witnessed the practice of in North America, of daily placing on stones in the sheep pastures, some dry salt for the use of the sheep. I have seen each of the sheep in his turn, and with eagerness, take a small portion of it. This is considered as a preservative against the *rot*, and as contributing to their general health and good condition.* It is understood that

* In an address of a late President of the Board of Agriculture, LORD SOMERVILLE, his Lordship observes with regret, “that salt is not a component part of the food of stock, of sheep more particularly. How many diseases (he continues) arising from damp climate, from relaxation, and from rank green food, might it not subdue !—In Germany, salt is universally given to oxen and cows in a fatting state, and their improvement is proportionate to the quantity given. We are all sensible of the effect of salt on the human body ; we are told how unwholesome, we know how unpalatable, fresh meat and vegetables are without it. The ancients held it in the highest estimation, “*Omnis mensa male ponitur absque sale.*” We also know the avidity with which animals in a wild state,

a considerable part of the salt which we export, *duty free*, to America, is used for the purposes of agriculture ; though by the time it reaches the American farmer, it costs him as much as two shillings and sixpence a bushel : and I have no doubt but in our humid and uncertain climate, and in the variety of our soils, it would *in small quantities* be found generally useful, in preserving our sheep from the *rot* and other complaints, hitherto deemed inevitable and incurable. In Spain the cows are regularly supplied with a little salt ; and seek the salt-pans of Africa and America, and the difficulties they will encounter to reach them. Is it not notorious that hay, mouldy from rain, is rendered palatable, and infinitely nutritious to cattle, by simply strewing salt on the stack, at the rate of 10 or 15 lbs. per ton, when making ? Equally notorious is it, that a sensible effect is hereby produced to the taste, that cattle will prefer it to better hay, well put together, and will demand, when fed on it, without injury to themselves, three times as much water ; which circumstance alone, accounts for that aptitude to fatten, which is never denied to hay so salted. *Communications of the Board of Agriculture*, vol. ii, p. 471.

the increase of their milk, and the benefit which stable-fed cattle derive from it, are confirmed by many authorities.* A Cheshire gentleman informs me, that when he wants extraordinary exertion from his horses, he always gives them a little salt ; and this is analogous to the practice in the East, where the camels are allowed salt

* In his Natural History, PLINY observes on the beneficial effects of salt, upon oxen, horses, and sheep ; and also on its greatly increasing the quantity and improving the quality of milk, so as to produce a superior kind of cheese. “ Pecudes, Armentaque et Jumenta *SALE* maxime solitantur ad *Pastum*, multo largiore *Lacte*, multoque gratiore etiam in *Caseo* Dote.” Lib. 31, cap. 7.—In the next chapter but one, he notices the medical benefit of salt, either taken internally or applied externally, in preventing and curing the *scab* in sheep and oxen. “ Pecorum quoque *Scabiem* et boum, illitus tollit. Daturque lingendus.”—When I am referring to the medicinal effects of salt, I should not omit to mention its salutary effects in scrophulous or other complaints, *in restoring poor persons to health and comfort, by the use of warm or cold artificial salt baths*, when they cannot afford the expense of salt at its present price ; or of a distant journey and a residence remote from their occupations.

during the passage of the Caravans over the Desert to Alexandria, as a support in the extreme fatigue which they undergo.

The advantage of augmenting the number of cultivated acres in this country, would certainly be of great use at present, and would have permanent effects on the increase of employment and subsistence in future. In many instances, however, legislative sanctions would be necessary, to enable the parties interested to proceed to *exclusive* cultivation: but in the millions of acres that surround our coasts, no partition of property, no cultivation of soil is required; we have only to *reap* what the bounty of Providence has abundantly supplied. The boundless fields are already white for the harvest; and the labourers are standing all the day idle, for want of employment,—ready to enter on their task, as soon as the *financial prohibition** is removed.—The encouragement

* THE DOWNS SOCIETY, associated in November, 1815, under the patronage of the EARL OF LIVERPOOL,

of our fisheries has been often in the view of the legislature: but all their measures have been defeated by the salt laws,—*Bounties* too, have been added; producing little effect, and subject to great abuse; and we have yet to learn, that the effectual and impartial bounty is to leave to the husbandman, the fisherman, the manufacturer, and

is a very gratifying example of the associations which would be formed for this purpose, and of the improvements which would take place in our fisheries, if the difficulties and impediments created by the salt duties, were but repealed. The fish which was cured by that society in the preceding year (with a very little, though very valuable instruction from *Mr. Sicoers*, a fishing merchant of London) received the first bounty paid under the late Act, on that part of the coast. They have sent 62 barrels of white herrings to Barbadoes, Antigua, Jamaica, and other West India Islands; from whence they have received the most favourable and gratifying accounts of the excellence of their fish; which sold at very high prices, a third more than those from either the United States, or British America. The Society have received orders for many hundred barrels for the ensuing season. *See the Report of the Committee of the Down's Society of Fisherman's Friends, 17th August, 1816.*

to all, *as far as may be*, the free use of that *produce*, which the BOUNTY of Providence has bestowed upon the country. If we really mean that the fisheries should prevail and prosper, as sources of internal supply and external commerce, as providing present employment for our sailors and future nurseries for our navy,* —if we desire that the fisherman and cottager on the sea-coast should lay in a winter supply of salt fish for themselves and their neighbours, we must no longer embarrass them with vexatious conditions, which *they cannot understand or comply with*: but leave them free to purchase at a cheap rate, and at the nearest shop, the SALT required for curing their fish,—and to use it for the benefit of

* There are about twenty thousand sailors on our southern coasts at present out of employment, being part of those lately dismissed from the Royal Navy, with little pensons proportioned to their services.—What a boon to them and others in like circumstances, would be the removal of the financial obstacles to the *salt fish* trade, and how ready would they and their boys be for the British Navy, when their country called for their services.

themselves and their country. It has been supposed, that there is already a sufficient allowance of salt for the fisheries, and that it is the fault of those who do not use it: but what sailor, what fisherman, or cottager can provide, *what the law requires*, proper and secure storehouses for keeping the salt, to be entered with and approved by the excise officer? Who can cure in *bulk*, or can *dry salt* a hundred weight of fish with only fifty pounds of salt, *the present reduced allowance?** And even if the full allowance of salt were restored to the fisherman, and the previous con-

* If the fish be *barrelled*, the allowance *may* be sufficient; but then the fisherman's expense is half as much again. The *Downs Fishery Society*, however, with all the instruction and assistance they have had, exceeded the parliamentary allowance of salt this Summer, even on *barrelled* fish; and the Treasury ordered the duty to be repaid to them, on the quantity of salt used beyond the proportion allowed by law. See *their Report*, p. 19.—On *foreign salt* imported for our fishery, I am informed there is no restriction. The Act for lessening the allowance on all *English salt* (55 Geo. 3d. Cap. 179.) passed last July.

dition of the erection and entry of proper and secure storehouses, entirely dispensed with,—what *uneducated* sailor, cottager, or fisherman, could travel through all the different sections of the Acts relating to this subject,—the bonds to be given, the annual accounts to be made out,—the entries, notices, and permits required,—and the penalties and forfeitures in breach of any of the forms prescribed? If an *educated lawyer** will do this, he will see the impos-

* A recent circumstance has occurred in regard to “the Association for the Relief of the manufacturing and labouring poor,” where *statesmen* and *lawyers* were the acting parties, and every assistance given by Government; and yet all their measures baffled by the interference of a petty excise officer.—As this is a case which came within my personal observation, I will briefly state the circumstances.—In order to provide relief for the poor under the pressure of scarcity, the sum of £17000. was raised by private subscription in the Metropolis. Among other measures adopted, a contract was entered into with the North Sea fishermen, to purchase of them, at the rate of £18. per ton, all the corned cod, which they could not otherwise dispose of; and in the year 1813, six hundred tons of corned cod, and three hundred tons of fresh cod, were supplied

sibility of any of the class of labourers and sea-faring men, such as I have described, *ever taking the benefit of these allowances.*

and distributed for the maintenance of our own poor, and of the French prisoners then in England. In 1814, the pressure of the scarcity still continuing, the Committee resolved to endeavour to double the supply: they therefore invested the sum of £2264..11. in the purchase of salt, prepared tanks for curing the fish, and hired double the number of vessels that were employed in the preceding year. When the fishermen were ready to proceed on their voyages, doubts were suggested, and notices given by the excise officer of the district, as to their allowance of salt. An alarm instantly spread among the fishermen; and though upon the Committee's application to the Treasury, an order was obtained for the Excise to make the full allowance of salt duty free, yet the terror of pains, penalties, and Exchequer processes, prevailed among the fishermen, and most of them abandoned their contract for the season. In consequence, the quantity of 900 tons, or rather (what might have been obtained but for officious interference) the expected supply of EIGHTEEN HUNDRED TONS of palatable and nutritious food for the relief of a suffering population, was reduced to 150 tons, being only a twelfth part of what might otherwise have been obtained; the Association was subjected to a heavy loss, and countless loads of fish were lost to the country.

But, were the financial fetters of the salt laws once removed, we should then see what NATIONAL INDUSTRY and NATIONAL ENTERPRIZE could effect.—Our sea-coasts would swarm with adventurous fishing boats; new means of employment would be afforded to the necessitous and unemployed; new supplies of life* would be conveyed into the interior of the Island; new sources of commerce be opened to foreign countries, and nurseries of seamen abound on our sea-coasts. No region on earth is so well adapted to the *salt fish* trade. We are a naval power: the ocean is our element. We possess a hardy enterprising race of sailors, now grievously suffering for want of employment: we have shoals of fish† surrounding our coasts, and an

* The *salt duties* have contributed to the disuse of *salt fish* in this country; which formerly made part of the winter stores and diet in most families. In the Earl of Northumberland's Household Book, we find fish in the established bill of fare for breakfast, which consisted among other things, of "two pieces of salt fish, six red herrings, four white ones, or a dish of sprats."

† In the Report of the DOWNS FISHERY, the Com-

inexhaustible store of native salt, which may be more easily and *much more profitably* applied in curing fish, than by exportation.

mittee (page 21) observe " that the periodical shoals of herrings, in their progress from the North Sea to the Channel, appear in wonderful abundance in their straits, in the early part of October, and remain till the end of November; about which time they proceed gradually to the westward, and are caught off the Isle of Wight till the end of February. Such is the profusion of these fish, while they continue between the Forelands, where they are necessarily condensed by the conformation of the straits, that the quantities taken on this part of the coast, amount to more than double the average catch of our great fishery at Newfoundland, in proportion to the time and number of hands employed in it. The mackerel are also found during their season, in remarkable abundance in these straits, which appear to form the limits of their migration up the Channel. In this neighbourhood (Deal) they generally remain from May to July, affording, like the herrings, a rich harvest that seems to invite the industry of the fisherman."—In pages 26 and 28, they add, that "Holland has no herrings near her own coast, but takes them on the coast of Britain, from Shetland to the coast of Sussex; commencing at the distance of 250 leagues, and ending at 50 leagues from her own ports.—The cod banks on the North Sea may be considered as common to both nations; but Iceland is only half the distance from Great Britain."

Though MANUFACTURES may not sup-
 ply so great or so desirable an
 Effects of the Salt duties on
 Manufactures. increase of our means of
 employment, as Agriculture and the Fish-
 eries, yet every addition to our manu-
 factures is a considerable addition to the
 demand for labour, as well as to the re-
 sources of the country: and here too
 the *salt duties* present the same obstacle to
 progress and prosperity. On two of our
 manufactures there is a limited and qualified
 allowance of the salt duties;—on glass, and
 oxy-muriatic acid for bleaching: but there
 are articles essentially necessary to our
 manufacturers, which the salt duties pre-
 vent our making at home; so that we are
 obliged to purchase from abroad, at much
 higher prices than we could make them at
 home. Such are *mineral alkali*, *sal-ammo-
 niac*, *magnesia*, and *Glauber salts*: which
 might be made in this country, with great
 advantage and in great quantities, with a
 part of the salt which we now export, free
 of duty. In other manufactures, the effect
 of the salt duties is *only to injure* the
 English manufacturer; who, for the salt

which his works require, must pay a duty of fifteen shillings a bushel on *our own native salt*, whilst the foreigner has it, duty free. To enumerate all the uses of salt, in their various processes* for facilitating and improving their operations, would require an intimate and confidential knowledge of the secrets of their manufactories: but it does not require that minute degree of information, to be convinced that on all our manufactures, (the exports of which exceeded in value last year FIFTY THREE MILLIONS) considering them merely as *objects of taxation*, the revenue suffers more in them only, from the effects of the salt duties, than the salt duties amount to.

Of articles essential to our manufactures; and capable of affording an increase Mineral of employment for the poor, in case Alkali.

* The Repeal of the Salt duties would increase the proportional use of *salt* in glazing *earthen ware*, instead of the use of *white lead*, which is very noxious to health, applied as it now is to the glazing of pans for milk, for salting beef, and for baking. See Bishop Watson's Chemical Essays, vol. ii. p. 265.

of the repeal, or allowance of the salt duties, I shall first notice the article of MINERAL ALKALI, an ingredient in soap, and in some other of our manufactures. Three tons of salt will make one ton of mineral alkali; the salt without the duty, costing *forty-eight shillings*, and with the duty, NINETY-SIX POUNDS. The salt duties, in this instance, are not simply an impediment, but a prohibition; and in order to obtain this ingredient for soap, &c. our manufacturers have been driven to have recourse to Spain for *barilla*, the price of which varies very much. During the war, it was as high as £80. per ton, and is as low as £30. at present. If salt were allowed to be used, free of duty, *mineral alkali* could be made of a superior quality, and at an inferior price, from our own salt works.—At the same time, the supply of *barilla* is very insufficient; and our soap boilers are generally obliged to use other inferior articles instead of it. This year the importation of *barilla*, though more than usual, is 6500 tons: but that is only a part of what this country requires for soap, and other manu-

factures. It is calculated, that there would be an annual demand at home, for 20,000 tons of mineral alkali; and that as much more might be immediately disposed of at foreign markets. Such a regular supply at home, would improve the quality of soap, lessen its price, benefit our other manufactures, and afford an advantageous market for 120,000 tons of salt, now sent abroad, duty free. It would set all our salt manufactories to work (many being now shut up) and produce an immediate increase in the demand for labour, not only in the salt works, and in preparing the new works for making the mineral alkali, and also in making it, but in our other manufactures. It would bear a duty of ten shillings per hundred weight; producing about £400,000. a year to the revenue.—*Mineral alkali* is an article so useful, that it is hardly possible to anticipate the *extent* of the demand for it, if the salt duties were out of the question: and with the spirit, science, and capital of our manufacturers, and our inexhaustible supply of salt and coals at less

than six-pence a bushel, our advantages in the manufacture of it would be such, as to exclude all competition of foreign manufacturers. I am not unaware, that when this has been suggested, the objection on the part of the Excise has been, that if Government were to allow the use of *salt*, which pays a duty of £30. a ton, for making *mineral alkali*, to pay only £10. a ton., the revenue would lose by it; and that what would be gained by the *alkali duty*, would be many times over conceded in the *salt duty*.— Now, it does not seem to have occurred, that the salt proposed to be used for making this *alkali* in England, is now *exported duty free* for the benefit of foreign manufacturers; and that if my sanguine wishes could be realized, and 40,000 tons of *mineral alkali* annually made from 120,000 tons of salt, *which would be otherwise sent abroad duty free*,—the revenue would gain £400,000. a year, where it now receives nothing—the country would save nearly as much more, of money now remitted abroad for the purchase of *barilla*—our manufactures and

export trade be augmented—the salt proprietor obtain a better market—the demand for labour be increased—and the public greatly benefited.

Another similar instance occurs in the making of SAL AMMONIAC ; Sal an article necessary to our Ammoniac. manufactures, and hitherto imported at a considerable expense. This is so useful in working metals, that not less than twenty tons of sal ammoniac are annually used by workers of metals, in Birmingham only. Our chemists lately discovered a process for making it from common salt, not only at much less expense, but of a superior quality : but the excise officers soon found out, that the salt used in this process, was liable to the full duty. Baffled, however, in this, the manufacturers made another effort ; by adopting a process, for making *sal ammoniac* from the *bittern* of common salt works, which is otherwise waste and refuse : but here again the excise officers interfered, and decided that the code of

salt laws prohibits this *bittern* to be converted to any such use, without payment of a duty that amounts to a prohibition. In the consequence, foreigners have made use of our own discovery, to establish manufactories of *sal ammoniac* in France and Germany.—In North Britain, however, the use of this *bittern* is allowed by Government, and *sal ammoniac* is making from it in many parts of Scotland.

During the process of making common
 Magnesia salt, it would be easy to separate the MAGNESIA, and thereby
 and Glauber
 Salts. greatly to improve the quality of the salt; for curing fish and animal food, and at the same time to produce quantities of *magnesia* for exportation; but the effect of the salt laws is to prohibit the use or sale of *magnesia* so obtained. As to GLAUBER SALTS, the *salt duties* have had a still more injurious and vexatious operation.—I have observed, that there is an allowance of the salt duties for making *oxy-muriatic acid* for bleaching. In preparing this, there is a con-

siderable *residuum*, which had been thrown away. To prevent this waste, a gentleman in Lancashire constructed a large apparatus, consisting of boilers and crystallizing vessels, and succeeded in producing from this residuum many tons of very fine GLAUBER SALTS; on which he paid to the revenue, the *then existing* duty of £30. a ton. "Government, however, (says Mr. Parkes, from whom I transcribe the fact)* has forbidden the sale of the *residuum*, and consequently this extensive apparatus has become useless."—In these and other articles of manufacture, though the increase of the *demand for labour* may not be so considerable as in husbandry and the fisheries, yet if the total amount of what would be added to our manufactures by the repeal of the salt duties, be fairly estimated with its consequences in the increase of commerce, and of the trades and occupations connected with manufactures and commerce, we shall find a considerable and immediate addition would be thereby made to the sources of employment.

* Parkes' Chemical Essays, vol. iv. page 162.

It must indeed astonish foreigners, that Foreigners an immense *prohibitory* impost duty free. should be laid on an article of British produce, essentially necessary to our manufacturers, agriculturists, and fishermen; whilst Ireland and Scotland are burthened in a lesser degree, and France, Spain, and all the rest of the world are *entirely free*. Very different is this from the policy of antient governments, recognized by the greatest and highest authority: "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?"—"Of strangers."—"THEN ARE THE CHILDREN FREE."—But with us, and by our laws, the *strangers* are free; and the *children* are taxed to forty times the value.

The imposition of a tax, so far beyond the Immoral real value of the article on which Effects. it is imposed, inevitably leads to strictness and severity of language in the regulations respecting it; and notwithstanding all the pains, penalties, forfeitures, and

restrictions, which have been so lavishly bestowed on these acts, payment of the duty is very frequently evaded. Taking into consideration the increase of price charged to the consumer, where an *excessive* tax has been previously advanced, and that this increase of price is also applied to *stolen salt* which has paid no duty at all, there will be little doubt but that the consumer pays twice the amount of what is received on account of this tax into his Majesty's Exchequer. This, however, is a minor consideration to that of the pernicious effects, which it produces on the moral character of the labouring class. The temptation of *forty times the original value, on a necessary article of life*, becomes so great as to affect their principles, and to convert honest men into scurvy knaves. Thievery and its concomitant vices prevail in the neighbourhood of great salt works, to an alarming degree. The salt is of so little value to the proprietor before the duty is paid, and is of so much value to the thief who evades the duty, that this kind of petty

plunder is carried on to a considerable extent ; so that many farmers in the neighbourhood, have a regular supply of salt at very reduced prices, periodically brought to their houses, to cure their bacon, salt their cheeses, and for other domestic purposes. This generates *thievish* habits among the labouring class,* and prepares

* The system which disgraces our statute book under the name of **GAME LAWS**, operates *universally*, and creates thieves and poachers over the whole kingdom. But the **SALT LAWS**, though *locally* confined to particular districts, yet so far as their infection extends, are far more deleterious. The temptation to evil, reaches every age and class of the necessitous ; is constantly present to them, and in its nature and degree is far more potent and destructive : and thus the unhappy labourer, seduced by the influence of bad laws, is led on from one fault to another, till he atones for his crimes by death, or transportation.—**SMUGGLING** is an evil likewise produced by similar temptations, and producing the same immoral effects.—It is very justly observed in the *Downs Fishery Report*, which I have before referred to, that the general extension of our **FISHERIES**, by giving honest and profitable employment to *sea-faring men*, “ would immediately “ reduce, and gradually supplant the contraband trade

them for atrocious crimes.—Two young men, who were executed a few years ago in Cheshire for defending their plunder by shooting at an exciseman, and who appeared to be by far the least culpable of their gang, confessed at the gallows, that *petty thefts in salt-works*, were the origin and cause of their criminal habits, and of the unhappy termination of lives, which might otherwise have been a blessing to the community.

Whenever the NATURAL PRODUCE of a country is capable of increase in value by the *intellectual skill*, or *manual labour* of the inhabitants, it is true policy, and by no means unjustifiable policy, to check, and even to prohibit the exportation of it, in its rude and *unmanufactured* state. The retaining of it at home as an object of manufacture,* will supply

“ which has been estimated at the enormous amount
 “ of fifteen millions sterling,—and thus render the
 “ revenue more productive.”

* I should extend the word *produce*, to all articles, not *completely* manufactured: such as the *English*

the means of employing and enriching the people, and of augmenting the revenue of the state: and when it shall afterwards be exported in its manufactured state, it will be of far greater value as an object of export, and at the same time will have afforded an increased supply of *profitable occupation, and well earned subsistence*, two of the greatest temporal blessings which any Government can confer on active and rational beings.—The most important articles of natural produce in this country are COALS, and SALT.—If we had shewn the same want of wisdom in respect of our *coals*, that we have done with regard to our *salt*,—supplied foreigners with them duty free, and imposed a very heavy tax on home consumption,—we should

twist, of which, it is said, large quantities have been lately shipped for the use of foreign manufacturers; who can weave the cloth at a cheaper rate than our weavers, but have not been able to succeed in *spinning the twist*, so as to make their woollen and cotton goods equal to ours. The exportation of this twist has deprived several of our manufacturers of employment and subsistence.

have been a wretched, insignificant, and contemptible people: manufactures and commerce would have been almost unknown amongst us, and agriculture would have sympathized in the general depression. But on the other hand, if we will act with regard to our SALT as wisely as we have done as to our COALS,—encourage the *profitable* use of it in arts and manufactures, and give to our own countrymen the free and (as far as may be) the *exclusive* benefit of it,*—all the advantages which this

* The British government is not the *only one* in the world that, in this respect, misjudges of its own true interest.—In his interesting and valuable account of the Brazils, Mr. BARROW states that, though there is plenty of *salt* on that coast, yet the exclusive right of the crown puts so high a price on it, that they cannot afford to give it their cattle, to whom the use of it is essential; nor can they afford to salt their meat with it, as “the salt that would be required to preserve the carcass of an ox, costs in general about thrice as much as the whole animal.”—“The monopoly of salt (he proceeds) is estimated to produce to the crown of Portugal, about £15,000. a year. Thus for the sake of realizing so *pitiful a sum*, thousands of cattle are suffered to perish, the carcasses of such

country has derived from the *free use of coals*, would be doubled by the *free use of salt*; and whenever we may think fit to favour other countries with a participation in this advantage, the imposition of a duty on *exported salt*, would prevent the favour from being considered as wholly gratuitous.

—It is on this ground that I submit that, not only during the continuance of the salt duties but even if they were wholly repealed as to ourselves, it would be a want of political wisdom, and an act of injustice to our own manufacturers, to allow the exportation of salt, *duty free*, beyond the limits of the united kingdom; but that on what is allowed to be exported to foreign countries, there should be a custom house duty, sufficient to compensate to our manufacturers for the greater burthen to which, in respect of higher wages and taxes, they are subjected.

“ as are slaughtered, for the sake of the hides only, to
 “ be thrown away, the *fisheries* on the coasts checked,
 “ and in a great measure rendered useless, and one
 “ great source of commerce and navigation entirely
 “ dried up.” BARROW's *Cochin China*, page 121.

I bear no personal enmity to the *Newfoundland fisheries*. But I am persuaded that one DOMESTIC FISHERY ^{Colonial Fisheries.} upon our own coasts,* *employing our own people*, though only of half their magnitude, would do this country infinitely more real service, than they can ever do. They can never provide employment for our own poor: and they are not, *exclusively*, nurseries for British seamen. So far indeed from their being EXCLUSIVELY so, it is more than doubtful whether their effects are not inimical and injurious to the interests of this country, whilst they are very favourable to those of the American States; especially if it should appear, that a considerable portion of the persons employed in those fisheries, are emigrants from our SISTER ISLAND;—young men in

* If the restrictions on the use of salt were removed, and those of our countrymen who are now engaged in the *Newfoundland Fishery*, would employ even a part of their capital *at home* in the BRITISH FISHERY, they might greatly benefit themselves,—our unemployed sailors and fishermen,—and their native country.

the prime and most valuable part of life ; who, instead of supplying our army and navy with sailors and soldiers, fly to a distant quarter of the globe ; leaving the helpless and the aged to be provided for at the cost, and by the labour of those who continue at home :—young men, who, at the expiration of their three * years service, generally settle for life in America ; and in the event of war, are much more likely to assist in manning the fleets of America and France, than to enter into the British navy.

Our natural advantages in respect of the
 Our natural advantages in making Salt. manufacture of salt, might give us a decided superiority over all other countries ;—advantages derived from our salt mines and brine springs,†

* The three year's service relates only to the apprentices, which they are bound to take under the navigation acts. The *green* or *fresh-men* (as they are called) go in hundreds every year from Ireland ; and instead of coming back as the old acts require, almost invariably go over to the Americans.

† The **BRINE SPRINGS** produce the great portion of the *English salt*. What is made of rock salt, or of

from our being washed on every side by the salt waves of the boundless and inexhaustible ocean,—and made more valuable by the vast beds of coal, to be found in almost every part of the island,—by the extent of our navigation,—by the enterprising spirit of our sailors and manufacturers,—and by the capital which we possess.—The mere dregs and refuse of our salt-pans, would produce glauber salts, magnesia, and sal ammoniac, to a great amount; the consumption of which, and the consequent demand, would be far greater in the civilized world, and even among savage nations, than an uninformed mind can conceive. The French process, of forming a dirty and inferior species of salt by mere atmospheric evaporation, must

sea-water, bears no comparison in point of quantity. The *brine* of Cheshire yields on an average 25 per cent. or one gallon of solid salt from four gallons of brine. Common sea water contains less than four per cent. of salt; but the strength, in a severe winter, might be increased, by adopting the Swedish practice of freezing the sea water, throwing away the ice, and reserving the remaining liquid for evaporation.

ever be tardy and imperfect, compared with what may be done by our scientific and enterprising manufacturers, possessed of the powerful agency of coal, and of every facility of operation. The mere waste and refuse coals of Newcastle alone,—what is thrown aside and trodden under foot as not worth collecting for use, would supply fuel for making salt to a great value.

Among the benefits of the repeal of the salt duties, I must not omit the ^{Improvements suggested.} improvements which would *then* take place in the making of salt.—On my first visit to Northwich, when I saw their grate-doors quite open, the supply of coals unlimited, a thick black smoke rising, as a public object and a public nuisance, and their salt pans uncovered and exposed to rain, I was not surprized at being informed, that the crystallizing of one hundred tons of salt, required from 70 to 100 tons of coal. At the entrance of the town, my attention was attracted by rows of new houses, built on each side of the way. I

complimented my conductor on the comforts which the labouring class appeared to enjoy here, and on the air of neatness and elegance which these buildings gave to the place. He told me these were *some* of the houses of officers of excise ; and on further inquiry added, that there were 120 resident excisemen at Northwich. With a feeling that these gentlemen were the *diseases* of the place, I exclaimed with Virgil,

Vestibulum ante ipsum, primisque in Faucibus orci
Pallentes habitant morbi—

History has said a great deal about the *thirty tyrants of Athens* : but what are they compared with the hundred and twenty of Northwich ? *Numerically*, I know nothing like them, except the “ *one hundred and twenty* princes, which it pleased Darius “ the king to set over the province of “ *Babylon.*”—I do not mean any personal disrespect to these gentlemen. It is not their behaviour, but their *existence* that I object to : or if they must exist, I think they would be much better employed in *catching fish*, than in preventing our having salt to

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cure it. Nor would I insinuate that Government abuses its power, when it employs so many excise officers in Northwich. Twice the number would not be sufficient to protect the revenue against the frauds and thefts occasioned by so excessive and disproportioned a tax.—What improvements can a man have the heart to attempt and perfect, or what experiments or investigations can he pursue with any spirit, when there are a *hundred and twenty persons* of different tempers and dispositions, living near him, each having the right* to examine all his works every hour of the day, interrupt his processes by the discovery of some obsolete clause in some forgotten Act

* It is so completely in the power of the excise officer to thwart and interfere with all the processes and operations of the salt manufacturer, that his only wise policy is UNLIMITED SUBMISSION.—What inducement can a man have to try a question with the Crown and the Board of Excise, when the Board is the judge, and the Crown pays no costs? Is it worth while to contest a penalty of 50*l.* at the expense of 100*l.* when the costs are not to be repaid, even though the judgment be in the subject's favour?

of Parliament, and check his inquiries and deprive him of the benefit of his skill and attention? This unceasing interference, with all their operations, has so damped and extinguished their talent and invention, that instead of wondering that our salt manufacturers have made so little use of our recent discoveries in chemistry, and in the application of fire, we should rather admire that they have not been chained down to the old process of pouring brine on burning wood, and then raking the salt out of the ashes.* In the construction of their boilers, and of the apparatus belonging to them, much benefit might be derived from Count Rumford's improvements. The doors of the grates should be made to

* This was the old English process.—TACITUS mentions it as a practice of the Germans: "*Illo in amne salem provenire, super ardentem struem fusa, contrariis inter se elementis, igne atque aquis concreta.*" *Annal. lib. 13, cap. 57.*—Pliny also mentions the German method of pouring the brine on a wood fire; and treats with contempt our superior process of boiling the brine, and crystallizing the salt by evaporation. *lib. 31, cap. 7.*

shut quite close, so as to lessen the draft and quiet the fire at pleasure. Checks in the top of the flues, and particularly in the approach to the ascent up the chimney, would prevent the wasteful escape of *unconsumed heat* in the vehicle of black smoke ; and contribute to preserve the apparatus from being destroyed by excess of fire, whilst it saved immense quantities of coals from being wasted, and converted into a public nuisance. Covers, or roofs to their boilers, would protect their processes from being checked by rain. Steam might be applied in many of their operations with great economy and effect ; and by proper arrangement, one boiler might be made to supply *steam-heat* to crystallize the contents of another. I have no difficulty in venturing to assert, that *above half* of the present expenditure of fuel*

* In the salt works to which my inquiries were chiefly directed, the quantity of coals used were about 12,000 tons a year ; a saving to the proprietor of half that expense, would amount to more than 4,000*l.* a year.

may be saved, and a superior kind of salt produced, so as to fetch a higher price in foreign markets. *Sunday salt*, as it is called, is preferred to any other: yet the only difference is, that in making it, the process not being completed on Saturday, the fires are let down over Sunday, and the crystallization proceeds gently and gradually until Monday. The *large grained fishery salt* bears a much greater price than common white salt, being produced by a slower process, and with a mitigated degree† of heat: yet in making this salt, no advantage is taken in point of eco-

† Bishop WATSON observes, that “the Dutch have long been famous for preparing a *salt* for the pickling of herrings, by which they have acquired a superiority in that article of commerce over all other European nations. Their principal secret in this business consists in *evaporating the brine* made from the solution of bay salt WITH THE GENTLEST FIRE, and in mixing with the brine a proper quantity of very *sour whey*; the acid whey unites itself with the uncombined fixed alkali, and thus prevents it from adhering to the common salt as it crystallizes. Any other mild acid might probably answer the same purpose.” Chemical Essays, vol. 2. page 63.

nomy ; the waste of coals is rather increased ; and a ton of coals is allowed to make a ton of this salt. Again ; the same *degree of heat* is continued during the whole process, instead of keeping up a boiling heat for only eight hours,* when a kind of granulation appears, and then leaving it *with a very gentle heat* for six or eight hours more, to complete the operation.—The objection to the common white salt is, that there is a proportion of *magnesia* in it, which from its *septic* quality, makes it not answer so well for curing beef and fish. In his manufactory of Cheltenham Salts, Mr. THOMPSON, in the same process that crystallizes his salts, and with little or no additional expense or trouble, separates the *magnesia*, and produces that article for sale to a considerable amount : but the salt manufacturers cannot *now* follow his example, and thus improve the quality of

* This is Mr. Thompson's practice at Cheltenham, where it answers very well. In his salts a kind of pellicle or scum forms on the top, in about eight hours, and is a signal for diminishing the heat.

their salt ; as the same objection would arise from the salt laws, to such a mode of producing *magnesia* from common salt, as has operated with irresistible effect against our manufacture of *sal ammoniac*.

I have already anticipated part of what I had to offer, on the probable ^{Effects of} effects of the repeal of the salt ^{the Repeal.} duties.—The advantages that would result from power being given to our unemployed sailors, fishermen, and labourers, to reap the full and free benefit of our *insular* situation, and to form petty associations with their *messmates* for catching and curing of fish,—thus exercising their industry in a manner congenial to all their wishes and habits of life, and obtaining an honest independence favourable to the moral virtues of the country,—would partly remove the temptation* to illicit and contraband

* In the Report of the Committee of the DOWNS FISHERY, the annual loss to the revenue by the *smuggling* of goods on the southern coasts of the island, is estimated at two millions a year. Whenever the repeal

trade, whilst it afforded present occupation to our seafaring men, and future supplies for our navy ;—advantages of such inestimable value to this country, that the petty considerations of finance sink before them.

—At the same time the extent of the improvements in agriculture by the possession of a rich and hitherto *prohibited manure*, cheap, and light in conveyance, and always valuable as part of the compost dunghill, would enhance the value of our cultivated estates, and produce new and increasing sources of useful EMPLOYMENT, in reclaiming and enriching millions of acres of waste and uncultivated lands.—In our manufactures, the *prohibition* that exists in some cases, and the *impediment* which embarrasses all our other operations, would be removed,* and our manufacturers

of the salt duties shall offer to all our SMUGGLERS the honest trade of fishermen instead of their present course of life, the saving thereby to the revenue, in this respect only, would go a great way to compensate for the abolition of all the salt duties.

* A gentleman, whose manufacture requires a good deal of salt, tells me he pays 36*l.* a ton for all the

be placed on a footing with those of other countries ; the prices of many of the necessities of life would be reduced ; and more science, more energy, and more capital be directed to extend their operations ; new processes would be introduced, new uses discovered, and fresh sources of occupation be supplied.—The addition of healthful and profitable employment always gives strength and vigour to the body politic, and in every state, and in all cases, is conducive to its vital prosperity ; but in this country, and *at the present moment*, there are peculiar and unprecedented circumstances, to increase its value beyond calculation.—Whilst, however, I am stating this, I am aware that GOVERNMENT has generally been, and is at present, *most earnest and anxious* to adopt every proper and practicable measure, for encouraging our manufactures, agriculture, and fisheries.—

salt which his works require :—thirty-six pounds for a ton of salt, for which the salt proprietor receives not quite sixteen shillings !

On that EARNESTNESS and ANXIETY I found my chief hopes of success.

When a tax that produces less than a million and a half into his Majesty's Exchequer, takes twice that sum out of the pockets of his subjects, and deprives them of the benefit of their *natural produce* to ten times its amount, it should seem an easy task to find terms of *commutation*, that would prove beneficial to all. The *division* of the payment, however, so as to make it fair and equal (as far as is practicable) may require some consideration; and I am not so vain as to pretend to any peculiar knowledge or talent on the subject: but having stated my objections to the existing salt duties, it seems to be incumbent on me, to offer my idea of the principles on which a SALT COMMUTATION may be proposed, as a measure of expediency and propriety.—In the first place, I would submit that the labouring poor should be entirely exempt; and have the free use of salt for domestic purposes, for

preserving their bacon and fish, for improving their bread now often spoilt for want of a little salt, for increasing the milk of their cows and the produce of their gardens, without any compensation on their part. In the next place, I conceive that income from trades and professions should not, especially in this instance, be subject to any contribution. A war like the last,—a contest for existence and independence, may require extraordinary taxes: but the labours of the hand and the head, the produce of mental and manual exertion, should *generally* be free from taxation. In the third place, the *commutation* should be so calculated, as not to subject the individual to more than what he is now charged with under the existing salt duties.—For example, if the *householder's* expense in salt be at present thirty shillings a year,* it

* The difference between the expense of a family, in salt at the taxed price of twenty shillings a bushel, or at the untaxed price of a shilling the bushel, is more than I could have conceived, until I made inquiry respecting the quantity used in my own family, and in some others.

will be an advantage to him to pay only twenty shillings a year in lieu of it.—If in a farming concern the tax on salt for cheese, butter, bread, bacon, beef, and other domestic purposes, costs the farmer five pounds a year, it will be a considerable benefit to him to have the free use of *untaxed salt*, not only for his house, but for his flocks and herds, for his cows and horses, for his hay, his pasture and arable land, by contributing only a *portion* of what he *now* pays for the partial use of salt for *domestic purposes** only.—If the salt duties

* In the Agricultural Report for the County of Chester by Mr. Holland, the annual allowance of salt for cheese, &c. in a farm of 200*l.* a year, is stated at half a bushel a week. This may perhaps be overstated, though the book is in general correct. I am, however, persuaded that the expense of salt at its present price, in a farm, is much more than the farmers are in general aware of: and if in other counties there is less salt required for cheese than in Cheshire, more may be wanted for bacon, bread, butter, beef, fish, and other domestic purposes; and if we add the use of it for hay, cattle, manure, &c. the advantage of the repeal to the farmer would be very considerable.

at present interfere with the improvement of landed estates, the landlords' contribution towards the repeal of them need only amount to a *small part* of the benefit which he would *immediately* derive from the repeal.—If, again, the manufacturer, on account of the scarcity or inferior quality of *Spanish barilla*, prefers *mineral alkali* made from salt, he may very well afford to pay a duty on the mineral alkali, of a *tenth* of what he now pays on the quantity of salt from which it can be made; and if he makes use of salt for producing *sal ammoniac*, *Glauber salts*, or *magnesia*, he may pay a similar duty on it.—If the salt proprietor is relieved from the embarrassing regulations on the exportation of salt, and has the full benefit of a very extensive and much better market* *at home*, he cannot

* There are very few articles of commerce so unprofitable as the *exportation* of English salt. In the first place, the price is very inadequate, and the market uncertain; they have this year attempted to get eighteen shillings a ton, and not succeeding, many of the works are shut up. Three-fourths of the price are, by their present process, expended in coals. Bonds

object to a trivial duty on that which is *exported* abroad:—and lastly, if by the repeal of the salt duties, the English manufacturer be enabled to make *muriatic and oxymuriatic acid*, objects of exportation to foreign countries, a tax may be laid on the exportation of them. On these princi-

from the proprietor and two sureties, to the amount of treble the duty (which on a load of a hundred tons would amount to 9,000*l.*), are required before the salt can be weighed and loaded at the works, and must be repeated again at the sea port, where the salt is again weighed; if, at the sea-port, there is any deficiency or excess (the comparative waste of salt being very uncertain) the proprietor is subject to penalties. The very expense of the bonds amounts to some hundreds a year.—This export trade in salt is nearly, if not wholly, confined to Liverpool, and amounts on the average of the last six years to 160,000 tons a year; which might be used at home, with infinitely more benefit to the country. The increase of price which salt would fairly bear, and the great demand for salt *at home*, in case of the repeal of the duties, would make its export a thing of minor consideration. It is also probable that an improvement in the process of making salt, would augment the demand for it abroad, even though the price were a little more on account of the duty.

ples I venture to propose that a moiety of the SALT COMMUTATION be produced by a moderate duty on *mineral alkali, sal ammoniac, glauber salts, and magnesia*, (produced from common salt) and on *salt* exported out of the united kingdom, and also on *muriatic and oxymuriatic acid** produced from salt, and *exported*; these duties, on the average, not exceeding a tenth of the present duties, on the salt required for the

* There are many trades and manufactures on the Continent, such as those of bleachers, calico printers, &c. which cannot be carried on without large supplies of MURIATIC ACID, and also of OXYMURIATIC ACID. And as foreigners, in making these chemicals, have had the *unrestrained* use of English salt, duty free, they obtain these articles, *so necessary to their operations*, at a much lower rate than our own manufacturers; who are subject to the severe restrictions of the 38th of Geo. III. in the use of salt, and are prevented from applying the *residuum* to any profitable purpose. If the salt used in England, were duty free, and a small duty laid on exported salt, *muriatic acid* and *bleaching salts*, would become with us articles of *manufacture* to send abroad; and, on exportation, would bear a moderate duty, equivalent to the export duty on the quantity of salt from which these articles are made.

several articles :—and that, for the encouragement of the manufacture of mineral alkali, the duty on *imported barilla* be increased. The other moiety of the commutation will be easily supplied, by a very trivial annual contribution from landed property, bearing a very small proportion to the benefit it would derive from the repeal; and by a similar contribution from the occupiers of farms and houses, not amounting to so much as they now pay on account of the salt duties. In this manner half of the proposed commutation, would be supplied by duties on *new* manufactures from salt, hitherto *prohibited by the salt duties*, or by duties on exports and imports which the *repeal* would warrant ;—and the inhabitants of England would not have to pay any more for the *use of salt* for all purposes (those new manufactures excepted) *than a part* of what they do now pay for the limited and restricted use of the portion of native salt, which they are now permitted to enjoy.

It may be said that the measure under consideration looks chiefly to the ^{Case of} interest of the salt proprietor, and ^{the Salt} Proprietor. will be of more benefit to him than to others. I do not admit the fact; for I am persuaded that our financial resources, our manufacturers, seafaring men, farmers, land proprietors,—and above all, the suffering and *unemployed* individuals of the labouring class, will derive great and important benefits from the measure. But for a moment suppose, that a considerable part of the advantages of the repeal of the salt duties, would accrue to the salt proprietor,—and then let us see what are his claims to be relieved from the unequal burthen, which the code of salt laws has imposed upon his property.—A bushel of salt, when purified and crystallized, is worth (exclusive of the duty) about fourpence halfpenny. On this bushel of salt the duty imposed is fifteen shillings, or 30*l.* per ton,—being forty times the value of the article. Such is the fact.—Let us then consider the *equity* of such a tax; and in-

quire, whether there is any other property in the United Kingdom, that pays a tenth part of its comparative amount. The *coal proprietor* may easily make the case his own, by only calculating the operation of a duty of 30*l.* a ton, on all coals for *home consumption*; so as to equalize his condition with that of the *salt proprietor*. There is nothing in the nature of coal,—no special ground of exemption,—no particular merit in its character or substance, to give it a preference over salt. They are both useful:—but many nations—the greatest part of the world—do very well without coals; none of them however can do *very well* without salt. Coal indeed is a substitute for turf, wood, and other fuel: but it will not manure land, preserve meat, cure fish, season and improve the food of man or beast, and render it palatable. Why then should the salt proprietor, in addition to all the other taxes, pay a tax of *forty times the value of his property*, when the coal proprietor pays nothing?—or rather, why should not both the proprietors be equally exempt,

and the public—the *party really interested*—enjoy the full benefit of these two useful and valuable articles of British produce, in employing and enriching its individual members, and giving strength, permanence, and prosperity to the empire ?

Let us, however, for a moment suppose the same duty of 30*l.* per ton ^{His Claim} were to be laid on coals, that is ^{for Relief.} already imposed upon salt, with the same allowance of it, *duty free*, to foreign nations, *so as not to injure their manufacturers*; and let us try to anticipate the strength of argument, and vehemence of language, which would be applied to shew the injustice and impolicy of such a tax. The claim of a royal fifth out of some mines has been thought oppressive. Yet what is a fifth ? what would be *four-fifths* of the annual produce of a *copper mine*, *lead mine*, or any other mine, compared with a tax which prohibits the proprietor, under the severest and most rigorously exacted penalties, to apply *three-penny worth of his own salt* for

the use of his family, until the sum of TEN SHILLINGS has been paid to the collector of excise *for permission to use it*?—Such, however, is the law*.—Compared with this, the taking from him *nine-tenths* of his annual produce, would be nothing. He would enjoy the remaining tenth freely.—What! after that he has raised his own property from the bowels of the earth, purified it, crystallized it, and fitted it for use, must he pay a fine of *forty times its value*, for permission to use it?—No privation, that does not take the whole, can be coin-

* The regulations respecting the salt duties are, on account of the *excessive amount* of the tax, necessarily very strict and severe. The salt proprietor is in no case, allowed admission into his own warehouses, except in presence of the excise officer, who keeps the key, and never trusts it out of hand on any account whatever. Whenever the proprietor wants admittance to them, he is obliged to give previous notice to the exciseman, and request him to attend. So, on the pumping into the pan, boiling, drawing, warehousing, and loading, previous notice must be given; and thereby time is lost, expense incurred, and the proprietor often materially injured.

pared with such a tax.*—I trust, therefore, that no Englishman who attentively considers the situation of the salt proprietor, will think it unreasonable that, when he has drawn up his brine from the springs on his own estate, and with considerable expense of fuel and labour, has purified and crystallized it, he should obtain eight-pence a bushel for the salt so produced, as well as the coal proprietor for his bushel of coals, brought out rough from the pit. What farmer would grudge paying two-pence for a peck of salt, if it would secure a load of hay from the effects of wet? or not give a shilling for a bushel and a half of salt, to preserve his sheep from the rot, and to increase the milk of his cows, the fat of his bullocks, and the health and strength of his

* In my attempt to draw the public attention to this subject, it is fortunate for me that I have no interest or concern in any salt works, nor (to my knowledge) any connection or relative, who has. My information, I can add, has been obtained from gentlemen whose knowledge and character induced me to give them credit, and has been confirmed by subsequent inquiry.

horses and other animals? or who would think of the cost of ten shillings, for fifteen bushels of salt, to sweeten and improve as many acres of sour coarse grass, or to restore and fertilize as much of exhausted soil? It would indeed be an insult to my countrymen, after their noble and disinterested stand for the liberty and happiness of the civilized world, to suppose that their minds can become at once so narrow and sordid, as to be insensible of the inequality and injustice of a tax, lying with such excess of burthen on the property of one class of their fellow subjects. If the redress of the grievance were to be attended even with some personal expense or loss to the other members, still it should not be withheld: but when the repeal of the tax appears to be of general benefit to the community,—the commutation on the whole far less burthensome,—and the only question, the adjustment of a *few annual shillings* more or less, in the degree of contribution to be made for the abolition of the tax,—it were an aspersion on the British character

(whilst kind and considerate to all other nations) to insinuate that it can fail in justice and attention to its own members.

The condition of a minister, however sought for and solicited, is seldom to be envied,—except when he has the means of doing an act of essential justice to individuals, and of general benefit to the community. Power so enjoyed, however awful the responsibility, is more than enviable ;—it partakes of the nature of the divine attributes.—If the thanks of a country be due to the man, who has made two stems of corn to grow where only one grew before, what debt of gratitude will be due to that STATESMAN, who shall have the glory —of adding to the rich and luxuriant herbage and produce of his native land,—of releasing the property of some of his fellow subjects from a burthensome inequality of condition, —of relieving the manufacturers from restraints and impediments calculated to check and paralyse all their exertions,—and of removing from the labouring class, strong

temptations to vicious and criminal habits, whilst they afforded them fresh means of subsistence, and opened to their industry, new and increasing sources of healthful and profitable employment?



